



Virginia Resource-Use Education Council

P.O. Box 90778 Henrico, Virginia 23228

Founded 1952

Business Meeting Minutes, October 6, 2015

Meeting start: 2:00PM End: 4:55PM

The October 6, 2015 VRUEC business meeting was held at Natural Bridge Hotel

VRUEC Member Agency Representatives present: Stephanie DeNicola (Culpeper SWCD), Cindy Duncan (CBF), Greg Eaton (Claytor Nature Center), Suzie Gilley (DGIF), Candace Lutzow-Felling(State Arboretum of VA/UVA), Bill Portlock(CBF), Eric Rhoades(DOE), Beth Sokolik(VASWCD), Tim Taglauer(Shenandoah National Park), Tamra Willis(Mary Baldwin College)

Guests: Sheila Barnett(DCR OEE), Krista Hodges (Dan River Basin Assn.), Page Hutchinson(DEQ/Project WET), Kathryn Paxton(VDACs), Amy Farinelli (Dan River Basin Association), Sam Fisher (VT/VCE), Beth Hawse (VT/VCE), Andrew Larkin (NOAA), Sherry Swinson (Hull Springs, Longwood University), Danielle Racke (Claytor Nature Center), Kathy Frame (VAST)

Welcome and Introductions-Greg Eaton welcomed the group and attendees introduced themselves.

Minutes from May 27, 2015 meeting were presented by Beth Sokolik. Suzie Gilley moved to approve minutes as presented, Bill Portlock seconded motion. Motion passes, minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report provided by Suzie Gilley. The checking account balance as of September 25, 2015 is \$13,377.71. The savings account balance on September 25, 2015 is \$4,364.33. Suzie provided a breakdown of ongoing project expenses and income noting that discrepancies were a result of grant projects occurring on a reimbursable basis.

Bill Portlock moved to approve treasurer's report, Stephanie DeNicola seconded motion. Motion passes, treasurers report approved.

Membership Committee Report provided by Sarah Nuss

24 Members on Council from 20 agencies/institutes. Makeup of the membership includes two non-profits with one pending. The current policy requires less than 20% of profits, current level is at 8%. Sarah reminded membership that in order to be voted in participants need to attend two meetings in calendar year

Nominations Committee: Greg Eaton notes that the nominations committee must nominate members to fill 2016-2017 slate of officers. Positions to be voted on at the Winter Meeting include: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer (2 positions).

The nominations committee will also discuss the VRUEC member appointment for the VAEE Board.

Virginia Association of Environmental Educators (VAEE) update provided by Greg Eaton. Greg asks VRUEC to consider approving VAEE as VA's affiliate of the NAAEE. VAEE may

seek non-profit membership on VRUEC. VAAE has filed with State Corporation Commission and is awaiting response. VAAE has filed with IRS for EIN. There are working operating procedures and bylaws. Inaugural meeting will be held Thursday October 8th at the VA Environmental Education Conference. The 90 registered attendees at VA EE conference are members of VAAE for one calendar year. Dues for VAAE have been included in registration for the conference. Founding Board Members are: Greg Eaton (chair), Charlene Talcott(vice chair) retired State Parks/private consultant, and Helen Kuhns(secretary) HRAEE/Hoffler Creek wildlife. Treasurer will be solicited. Benefits of VAAE membership registration includes a stream of reliable funding for regional EE teams. Membership fee is \$25. Of each individual dues, \$15 stays with VAAE for purpose of organizing and offering grants. \$10 from individual membership goes back to that member's regional team. Organizational membership is \$100, this goes directly to statewide grants. Membership is open to anyone that is an interested party. All individual members have voting rights and all are eligible for board positions. Greg notes that VAAE would assume affiliate status of NAAEE once VAAE has received 501 c 3 status.

Executive Order#42 Conservation Classroom Committee Update provided by Suzie Gilley. Suzie has sent VRUEC members a link to Conservation Challenge Submittal Forms. Suzie notes challenges need to be submitted by end of October. Suzie shares a draft challenge from DGIF and provides additional instruction for members to submit challenges and reviews the process for teachers to achieve these challenges.

Suzie reviews details about the process for challenges and clarifies appropriate challenges. Suzie notes that it would be best that they not be site specific to a specific park or location. It is noted that in the future teachers will have the option to add their own challenges through an "other" category.

Executive Order#42 Systemic Sustainability/ Environmental Literacy Committee Update provided by Eric Rhodes. Eric notes that there have been a few technical difficulties with the committee. Mike Foreman, Tamra Willis, Bill Portlock, Stephanie DeNicola, and Kathryn Hodges are present at the meeting and have participated so far.

This program includes a school division systemic approach to Environmental Literacy. The committee is still reviewing the program logistics. This program may serve as a step between VA Naturally Schools and Green Ribbon schools program. The program would ideally be distributed broadly by November at the VAST Meeting in November along with other science education conferences at that time period. It is noted that the November 2015 VAST conference will be in Chantilly.

It is noted that the VA Department of Education has added an environmental literacy piece to the DOE website.

VA NCLI Coalition Report: Bill Portlock provided written report which has been included with the minutes.

Discussion continued on participation in coalition meetings and process moving forward for the coalition. VNCLI is seeking additional sources of private/public funding that could serve as a match.

NOAA Report provided by Andrew Larkin and included with the minutes.

VRUEC Grant Updates:

Watershed Educators Institute (W.E.I.) presented by Page Hutchinson. Workshops are scheduled through June. Registration numbers are good.

NOAA BWET Watershed Academies presented by Page Hutchinson. First two weekends were successful. Culpeper SWCD, Thomas Jefferson SWCD, and Shenandoah National Park have served as point of contact resources so far. Initial weekend at SNP was cancelled due to weather. The fourth weekend will include all academies gathering at once. Page noted that Potomac Watershed Academy has seen poor registration. Page provided input from past year's evaluations. Page would like to be able to include input on future grant proposals. Suzie notes those that provided time, resources, etc. will need to report on these items for in-kind match piece of grant report. Stephanie noted that Superintendent's memo may not have been most effective means of distributing registration for the Academies. Eric commented that regional EE groups via VAEE may be a better means of communication for advertisement.

NOAA BWET Environmental Literacy Planning comments provided by Suzie Gilley.

The initial project that included two day workshops for Principals did not happen as planned in 2015 due to scheduling/timing conflicts. The new plan includes principal meetings to be held at Blandy (UVA), Langley, Abingdon, and Richmond at DGIF. These workshops will bring together VRUEC members to engage with principals on Environmental Literacy topics. This is still in the planning stages. Eric suggests utilizing this program to include a "team" not individual principals. Suzie asks for committee to plan to further this project and requests a face to face meeting to be held at DGIF in Richmond. Attendees at the meeting that volunteer to join this committee include: Stephanie DeNicola, Greg Eaton, Page Hutchinson, Cindy Duncan, Eric Rhoades, Tamra Willis, Bill Portlock, and Candace Lutzow-Felling. The timeline to spend on this grant is September 2016. Suzie will send a doodle poll to the committee to set meeting dates to meet by November. An extension may be possible through a request to NOAA.

Tamra Willis notes that Environmental Literacy/Systemic Sustainability committee has discussed similar models planned as proposed for this grant project. The group agrees that these planning discussions need to be grouped together.

Suzie notes that NOAA BWET grant applications are due in December. Action will need to be taken soon if VRUEC wishes to apply for this.

Chesapeake Bay Trust: Eric Rhoades notes that this small grant was put towards meetings with science supervisors etc. Following these meetings 90% of schools are participating in the ELit tool. A small pocket of funding will support lodging and registration for these divisions at VSELA. 100% of those that attended the VSELA meeting in May completed the ELit tool. Eric asks the group to review the raw data to create/add questions for the next cycle of the ELit tool.

Regional Team Updates: Discussion followed regarding role of Regional Teams on the VRUEC. Regional Teams as individuals/groups are not currently members of VRUEC, rather they are invited to VRUEC meetings to provide updates on their regional teams.

Old Business

Virginia Natural Resources Guide – some topics not yet updated on web. They have been submitted to DCR and are awaiting review to be posted on website.

New Business

Request from VAEE to take on role as NAAEE Affiliate (may want assurance that VAEE Affiliate rep is present at VRUEC meetings). Greg clarifies this request as a need to keep open communication between VAEE, VRUEC, and NAAEE. It is suggested that the nominating committee of VRUEC include this VAEE representation as a part of the discussion. The nominating committee has asked for input for nominations for VRUEC board. The nominating committee will review current membership list for nominations. Sheila noted that she has sent VRUEC member updates to DCR host website.

Requests for Winter Business Meeting:

-Suggestions for Brock center, Graves Mountain Lodge, DGIF

VAST Representative:

Stephanie asks for someone else from VRUEC to take her place on VAST. Suzie will represent VRUEC at VAST PDI in November. Cindy Duncan agrees to serve as VRUEC representative at VAST.

Meeting adjourns at 4:55 PM

Attachments: VA No Child Left Inside Report, NOAA Report

VRUEC Virginia No Child Left Inside Coalition Report 10.6.15

(This may be considered a part of the VRUEC Advocacy Committee work)

The VNCLI Coalition membership convened September 2, 2015 at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden to discuss our goals and why the coalition was formed, Coalition successes to date, and to identify opportunities in the future.

The Goals:

- Advocate for Environmental Literacy in Virginia
Advocate for dedicated funding for systemic environmental literacy in Virginia.
Advocate for bolstering environmental literacy with alternative assessments through the work of the SOL Innovation Committee

EL Successes to date:

- Chesapeake Bay Agreement with Environmental Literacy Goal
- Governor McAuliffe's Executive Order #42 for Environmental Literacy Challenge
- Participation in Standards of Learning Innovation Committee
- Building and expanding Coalition membership.

Opportunities:

- Work for funding in Governor's 2016 budget for experiential learning and environmental literacy, and for sustainable schools.
- Develop private funding mechanism for match with public funding.
- Monitor and engage in the work of the SOL Innovation Committee. Propose panel on environmental literacy before SOL I Committee.
- Advance environmental literacy through the Science SOL review and revision process, beginning in 2016.
- Continue to grow the Coalition and seek out all opportunities to engage Virginia decision makers in the importance of environmental literacy.

On September 17, 2015 the Coalition sent a letter to Secretary of Education Holton advocating for new funding for systemic environmental literacy in Virginia.

Eighteen member organizations signed onto the letter.

- The letter requested that the Commonwealth of Virginia commit to a new investment to support experiential learning and teaching for all of Virginia's students, including outdoor-based learning experiences.
- **\$5.57 million in funding over 3-5 years was requested.** Details are in an addendum. The Coalition was given 24 hours to address questions generated by the letter. There was too short window to re-write and re-circulate the letter to Coalition members to sign on again, so an addendum, on CBF letterhead, was developed and sent with the letter.

NOAA Provides More Than \$1 Million to Support Bay Watershed Education in Virginia

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Hampton (Va.) City Schools, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation will host an event at 10 a.m. on October 2, 2015 at Sandy Bottom Nature Park in Hampton to announce more than \$1 million in NOAA funding that will be awarded to support Bay watershed education in Virginia.

At this event, NOAA will announce the 2015 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) grants that will support new and ongoing watershed education projects including \$120,000 to Hampton City Schools to support systemic watershed education training and experiences for principals and school administrators, elementary, and secondary teachers, all 4th grade through 7th grade students and select high school science students.

B-WET funded programs are making a difference in increasing both students' environmental awareness and their desire to act to improve the health of their local watersheds.

In addition to the grant to Hampton City School, NOAA is also announcing the following 2015 Chesapeake B-WET grants in Virginia:

- \$75,000 to York County Schools to support systemic watershed education training for teachers and watershed educational experiences for 4th grade, 6th grade, and high school earth science and biology students in the county.
- \$52,000 to Fairfax County Public Schools to support watershed education training and environmental action projects for middle school science teachers and their students in the county.
- \$67,000 to Friends of the Rappahannock to support watershed education training for 6th grade teachers and watershed educational experiences for 6th grade students in Richmond, Lancaster, Middlesex, Essex, Westmoreland, and King George counties.
- \$50,000 to Elizabeth River Project to develop best practices for systemic teacher training and student watershed educational experiences for Norfolk, Va. students.
- \$43,000 to Boxerwood Nature Center in Lexington, Va. to continue their watershed educational experiences for students in teachers in the Rockbridge County area.
- \$90,000 to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) to continue support for a CBF-Virginia Beach public schools partnership to provide watershed education and field experiences for all 6th and 7th grade students and teachers.
- \$87,000 to the James River Association to continue support for watershed educational experiences in the James River for students and teachers in 2 Richmond area counties.

NOAA Report Continued...

- \$66,000 to Mary Baldwin College to continue support for watershed educational experiences for teachers and students in Staunton, Va. with a special focus on sustainable agriculture/food production.
- \$100,000 to Old Dominion University to continue their work with students and teachers in Portsmouth public schools with a special focus on building observing buoys to be placed in the Elizabeth River.
- \$50,000 to CBF for training principals and school administrators in Northern Virginia and Maryland to support the use of meaningful watershed educational experiences in schools.
- \$75,000 to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) to continue VDEQ's professional "how to conduct a meaningful watershed educational experience" training sessions for non-formal environmental educators throughout the Commonwealth.
- \$139,000 to the Virginia Resource Use Education Council (VRUEC) to continue VRUEC's watershed education academies for middle and high school science teachers in small, underserved counties in the Bay watershed in Virginia.
- \$75,000 to the Ocean Discovery Institute to complete their work to replicate their successful San Diego-based Urban Environmental STEM project in Norfolk

For more information about the NOAA Chesapeake B-WET grant program, go to <http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/bay-watershed-education-and-training-b-wet/bay-watershed-education-and-training-b-wet>

For more information, contact: Andrew Larkin with NOAA at 757-441-6746 x201